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### Attempts to find the correct structure of uniflorine A

Andrew Stewart Davis  
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# Attempts to find the correct structure of uniflorine A

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements  
for the award of the degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**  
**from**  
**University of Wollongong**



**Andrew Stewart Davis**

B. Sc (Hons)

School of Chemistry

May, 2008

## **Declaration**

I, Andrew Stewart Davis, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Department of Chemistry, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless due reference is provided. This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Andrew Stewart Davis

May, 2008

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration.....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iii
List of Figures.....	vi
List of Schemes.....	ix
List of Tables.....	xii
List of Abbreviations.....	xiv
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	xvi
Acknowledgements.....	xvii
Publications arising from this thesis.....	xviii
 <b>CHAPTER 1: Introduction</b> .....	 1
1.1. Alkaloids.....	1
1.2. Definition of alkaloids.....	2
1.3. Occurrence and distribution of alkaloids.....	3
1.4. Alkaloids in folkloric medicine.....	4
1.5. Initial project plan.....	6
1.6. Polyhydroxylated alkaloids.....	7
1.7. Occurance of polyhydroxylated alkaloids.....	9
1.8. Biological activities of polyhydroxylated alkaloids.....	12
1.9. The value of total synthesis in natural product structure determination.....	14
1.10. Retrosynthetic analysis of the proposed structure of uniflorine A.....	16
 <b>CHAPTER 2. 1-Deoxy-castanospermine – a model study</b> .....	 21
2.1. Petasis reaction.....	21
2.2. Ring-closing metathesis.....	24
2.3. Hydrogenation.....	25
2.4. De-acetylation.....	26
2.5. Mitsunobu cyclization.....	26
 <b>CHAPTER 3. Synthesis of 1, the proposed structure of uniflorine A</b> .....	 30
3.1. Petasis reaction.....	31
3.2. Ion-exchange chromatography.....	32
3.3. <i>N</i> -Boc protection.....	34
3.4. <i>O</i> -Tr protection.....	35
3.5. <i>O</i> -Bn protection.....	37
3.6. Ring-closing metathesis.....	42
3.7. Dihydroxylation.....	44

3.8. <i>O</i> -Benzylation.....	44
3.9. <i>O</i> -Tr and <i>N</i> -Boc deprotection.....	45
3.10. Appel cyclization.....	52
3.11. <i>O</i> -Bn deprotection .....	53
3.12. Acetylation .....	56
3.13. Synthesis of the correct enantiomer of putative uniflorine A.....	59
<b>CHAPTER 4. Attempted syntheses of 1-<i>epi</i>- and 2-<i>epi</i>-1 .....</b>	<b>63</b>
4.1. Preparation of substrate <b>80</b> .....	64
4.2. Synthetic strategies for 1- <i>epi</i> -1.....	65
4.3. Synthetic strategies for 2- <i>epi</i> -1.....	67
4.4. Choosing a synthesis from several options.....	69
4.5. Formation of cyclic sulfate.....	70
4.6. Ring-opening of cyclic sulfate.....	72
4.7. Epoxidation.....	73
4.8. Attempted epoxide ring-opening.....	74
<b>CHAPTER 5. Synthesis of putative 1,2-di-<i>epi</i>-1 .....</b>	<b>79</b>
5.1. RCM of oxazolidinone <b>122</b> .....	81
5.2. RCM of oxazinanone <b>114</b> .....	83
5.3. Differences in Grubbs' I and II catalyst activities .....	84
5.3.1. Back-bonding .....	85
5.4. Methods for improving access to oxazinone <b>115</b> .....	88
5.4.1. Triphosgene method .....	88
5.4.2. The ' <i>N</i> -Troc' method.....	93
5.4.3. Comparison of the different methods for accessing <b>123</b> and <b>115</b> .....	95
5.5. Dihydroxylation of oxazinone <b>115</b> .....	95
5.6. Dihydroxylation of oxazolone <b>123</b> .....	96
5.7. <i>O</i> -Benzylation and <i>O</i> -Tr deprotection.....	98
5.8. Hydrolysis of oxazinanone <b>144</b> .....	99
5.9. Elaboration to the target .....	100
<b>CHAPTER 6. Glycosidase inhibitor testing.....</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>CHAPTER 7. Determining the correct structures of uniflorine A and B.....</b>	<b>106</b>
<b>CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>EXPERIMENTAL .....</b>	<b>117</b>

<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>155</b>
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## List of Figures

<b>Figure 1.1.</b> Chemical structures of theophylline and caffeine .....	1
<b>Figure 1.2.</b> Chemical structures of morphine, codeine and heroin .....	1
<b>Figure 1.3.</b> Examples of simple and complex alkaloid structures .....	2
<b>Figure 1.4.</b> Chemical structures of berberine, senecionine <i>N</i> -oxide and taxol .....	3
<b>Figure 1.5.</b> Bitter-tasting alkaloid coccinelline is emitted from <i>Coccinella septempunctata</i> .....	3
<b>Figure 1.6.</b> <i>Atta Texana</i> communicate using trail pheromones comprised of alkaloids .....	3
<b>Figure 1.7.</b> Highly lethal alkaloid Batrachotoxin; found in the skin of <i>Phyllobates terribilis</i> ....	4
<b>Figure 1.8.</b> <i>Eugenia uniflora</i> , source of Nangapiri .....	5
<b>Figure 1.9.</b> Proposed chemical structures for the alkaloids isolated from a water-soluble extract of <i>E. uniflora</i> .....	6
<b>Figure 1.10.</b> Some analogous compounds of uniflorine A, synthesized by Pyne <i>et al</i> .....	6
<b>Figure 1.11.</b> Norjirimycin, the first polyhydroxylated alkaloid isolated .....	7
<b>Figure 1.12.</b> Selected piperidine, pyrrolidine, pyrrolizidine, indolizidine and nortropane alkaloids.....	8
<b>Figure 1.13.</b> (a) <i>Omphalea diandra</i> (Euphorbiaceae) in Panama, a source of DMJ.....	9
(b) <i>Angylocalyx</i> sp. (Leguminosae) in Kenya, a source of DMJ and D-AB1.....	9
<b>Figure 1.14.</b> <i>Castanospermum australe</i> (Leguminosae) in Australia, a source of castanospermine and fagomine .....	10
<b>Figure 1.15.</b> <i>Alexa canaracunensis</i> (Leguminosae) in Brazil, a source of alexins .....	11
<b>Figure 1.16.</b> <i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i> in the UK (Hyacinthaceae), a source of hyacinthacines.....	11
<b>Figure 1.17.</b> Comparison of DNJ and DMDP with the carboxonium ion transition state.....	13
<b>Figure 1.18.</b> Mechanism of retaining (a) and inverting (b) glycoside hydrolysis.....	13
<b>Figure 1.19.</b> Miglitol, a clinical treatment for non-insulin-dependent diabetes.....	14
<b>Figure 1.20.</b> Progression of natural product synthesis.....	15
<b>Figure 1.21.</b> Comparison of <b>1</b> and similar synthesized compounds .....	16
<b>Figure 1.22.</b> Anti-1,2-amino alcohol functionality within the structure of <b>1</b> .....	19
 <b>Figure 2.1.</b> <sup>1</sup> H NMR spectrum (300 MHz, CDCl <sub>3</sub> ) of acetylated Petasis product <b>39</b> .....	21
<b>Figure 2.2.</b> <sup>1</sup> H NMR spectrum (300 MHz, CDCl <sub>3</sub> ) of <b>40</b> .....	24
<b>Figure 2.3.</b> Single crystal X-ray structure of <b>40</b> .....	24
<b>Figure 2.4.</b> Single crystal X-ray structure of <b>41</b> .....	25
<b>Figure 2.5.</b> C-3 and C-5 <sup>13</sup> C NMR (CDCl <sub>3</sub> ) chemical shifts (ppm) for a C-6,7 acetonide of <i>ent</i> -1-deoxycastanospermine and stereoisomers .....	27
<b>Figure 2.6.</b> DEPT NMR spectrum (CDCl <sub>3</sub> ) of <b>44</b> .....	28



<b>Figure 2.7.</b> $^1\text{H}$ NMR spectrum (300 MHz, $\text{CDCl}_3$ ) of <b>44</b> .....	29
<b>Figure 3.1.</b> $^1\text{H}$ NMR spectrum (300 MHz, $\text{CD}_3\text{OD}$ ) of <b>38</b> .....	32
<b>Figure 3.2.</b> $^1\text{H}$ NMR spectrum (300 MHz, $\text{CDCl}_3$ ) of <b>47</b> , showing peak-broadening .....	35
<b>Figure 3.3.</b> TLC analyses of the <i>O</i> -benzylation of <b>48</b> at 6 h and 24 h .....	37
<b>Figure 3.4.</b> $^1\text{H}$ NMR spectrum (300 MHz, $\text{CDCl}_3$ ) of oxazolidinone <b>41</b> .....	41
<b>Figure 3.5.</b> $^1\text{H}$ NMR spectrum (300 MHz, $\text{CDCl}_3$ ) of oxazinanone <b>57</b> .....	41
<b>Figure 3.6.</b> TLC analysis of the TFA mediated deprotection of <i>N</i> -Boc and <i>O</i> -Tr groups .....	46
<b>Figure 3.7.</b> $^1\text{H}$ NMR spectrum (300 MHz, $\text{CDCl}_3$ ) of <b>61</b> .....	46
<b>Figure 3.8.</b> $^1\text{H}$ NMR spectrum (300 MHz, $\text{CDCl}_3$ ) of <b>62</b> .....	47
<b>Figure 3.9.</b> $^1\text{H}$ NMR spectrum (300 MHz, $\text{CDCl}_3$ ) of mono-protected <i>O</i> -Tr derivative <b>63</b> .....	48
<b>Figure 3.10.</b> $^{13}\text{C}$ NMR spectrum (75 MHz, $\text{CDCl}_3$ ) of mono-protected <i>O</i> -Tr derivative <b>63</b> .....	48
<b>Figure 3.11.</b> $^1\text{H}$ NMR spectrum (500 MHz, $\text{D}_2\text{O}$ ) of <i>ent</i> - <b>1</b> and $^1\text{H}$ NMR data of uniflorine A.....	53
<b>Figure 3.12.</b> C-3,5 $^{13}\text{C}$ NMR chemical shifts ( $\text{D}_2\text{O}$ , ppm) for several 2-hydroxycastanospermines synthesized by Fleet <i>et al</i> .....	54
<b>Figure 3.13.</b> $^{13}\text{C}$ NMR spectrum (75 MHz, $\text{D}_2\text{O}$ ) of <b>54</b> .....	54
<b>Figure 3.14.</b> Fully assigned $^1\text{H}$ NMR spectrum (500 MHz, $\text{D}_2\text{O}$ ) of <i>ent</i> - <b>1</b> .....	55
<b>Figure 3.15.</b> Selected nOe correlations observed in the NOSEY spectrum of <i>ent</i> - <b>1</b> .....	55
<b>Figure 3.16.</b> Single crystal X-ray structure of <b>64</b> .....	56
<b>Figure 3.17.</b> Comparison of assigned $^1\text{H}$ NMR chemical shifts between uniflorine A, <i>ent</i> - <b>1</b> , and three analogous pentahydroxyindolizidines, <b>65</b> , <b>66</b> , <b>67</b> .....	57
<b>Figure 3.18.</b> Selected $^1\text{H}$ NMR <i>J</i> values for uniflorine A, <i>ent</i> - <b>1</b> , <b>66</b> and <b>69</b> .....	58
<b>Figure 3.19.</b> Our proposed structure for uniflorine A .....	58
<b>Figure 3.20.</b> Single crystal X-ray structure of <b>80</b> .....	62
<b>Figure 4.1.</b> Synthetic targets 1- <i>epi</i> - <b>1</b> and 2- <i>epi</i> - <b>1</b> .....	63
<b>Figure 4.2.</b> (a) AM1 representation of oxazolone <b>85</b> (b) 6-31G* representation of the HOMO of oxazolone <b>85</b> .....	66
<b>Figure 4.3.</b> TLC analysis of reaction to produce cyclic sulfite <b>97</b> .....	71
<b>Figure 4.4.</b> $^1\text{H}$ NMR (500 MHz, $\text{CD}_3\text{OD}$ ) spectrum of the major product .....	75
<b>Figure 4.5.</b> $^{13}\text{C}$ NMR (125 MHz, $\text{CD}_3\text{OD}$ ) spectrum of the major product .....	76
<b>Figure 4.6.</b> $^{13}\text{C}$ NMR chemical shifts ( $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 75 MHz) of C-3 and C-4 carbinol carbons in the previously synthesized diols <b>91</b> and <b>75</b> .....	76
<b>Figure 4.7.</b> Possible structures for the major product of the epoxide ring-opening reaction .....	76
<b>Figure 4.8.</b> $^1\text{H}$ NMR comparison of product <b>107</b> and an analogous literature compound <b>109</b> .....	78
<b>Figure 4.9.</b> Assigned $^{13}\text{C}$ NMR spectrum (75 MHz, $\text{CDCl}_3$ ) of the major product .....	78

<b>Figure 5.1.</b> $^1\text{H}$ NMR spectrum of the oxazolone <b>123</b> (300 MHz, $\text{CDCl}_3$ ) .....	81
<b>Figure 5.2.</b> Desired oxazolidinone <b>125</b> and three other candidates for the two side-products ..	89
<b>Figure 5.3.</b> $^1\text{H}$ NMR spectra (500 MHz, $\text{CDCl}_3$ ) of diastereomers <b>141</b> and <b>142</b> .....	97
<b>Figure 5.4.</b> $^1\text{H}$ NMR spectrum (500 MHz, $\text{CDCl}_3$ ) of 1,2-di- <i>epi</i> - <b>1</b> .....	101
<b>Figure 6.1.</b> Determination of the extinction coefficient of <i>p</i> -nitrophenolate .....	103
<b>Figure 7.1.</b> Casuarine diastereomers that have appeared in the literature .....	106
<b>Figure 7.2.</b> (a) Casuarine glycoside isolated from <i>Casuarina equisetifolia</i> , and <i>Eugenia jambolana</i> ; (b) Natural products isolated from <i>Eugenia uniflora</i> .....	107
<b>Figure 7.3.</b> Overlap of <b>1</b> with <b>152</b> and <b>154</b> .....	109
<b>Figure 7.4.</b> $^1\text{H}$ NMR spectra of $\text{D}_2\text{O}$ at 30 °C of (a) casuarine <b>150</b> , pH 8.3, and (b) 3- <i>epi</i> -casuarine <b>151</b> , pH 9.3. Spectra taken from Fleet <i>et al</i> .....	110
<b>Figure 7.5.</b> nOe Analysis of the proposed conformation of putative uniflorine A; comparison to 6- <i>epi</i> -casuarine .....	113

## List of Schemes

<b>Scheme 1.1.</b> Synthesis of 2 <i>S</i> -2-hydroxycastanospermine <b>8</b> by Fleet <i>et al</i> .....	17
<b>Scheme 1.2.</b> Cornerstone of Denmark's synthesis of 1- <i>epi</i> -castanospermine .....	17
<b>Scheme 1.3.</b> Synthesis of dipolarophile <b>25</b> .....	18
<b>Scheme 1.4.</b> Remainder of the synthesis of 1- <i>epi</i> -castanospermine by Denmark <i>et al</i> .....	18
<b>Scheme 1.5.</b> Retrosynthetic analysis for uniflorine A .....	20
<b>Scheme 2.1.</b> Model study synthesis of <i>ent</i> -1-deoxy-castanospermine <b>37</b> .....	21
<b>Scheme 2.2.</b> Results of the Petasis reaction and subsequent <i>O</i> -acetylation .....	22
<b>Scheme 2.3.</b> Proposed mechanism explaining stereoselectivity in the Petasis reaction.....	23
<b>Scheme 2.4.</b> Results of the RCM of <b>39</b> and hydrogenation of <b>40</b> .....	25
<b>Scheme 2.5.</b> Result of the deacetylation of <b>41</b> .....	26
<b>Scheme 2.6.</b> Potential mechanisms of reacting <b>42</b> under Mitsunobu conditions .....	28
<b>Scheme 3.1.</b> Proposed synthesis of <i>ent</i> - <b>1</b> .....	31
<b>Scheme 3.2.</b> Mechanism of acidic ion-exchange chromatography .....	33
<b>Scheme 3.3.</b> Selected literature procedures for <i>N</i> - Boc protection.....	34
<b>Scheme 3.4.</b> Synthesis of <i>N</i> -Boc product <b>47</b> .....	35
<b>Scheme 3.5.</b> Selected literature procedures for <i>O</i> -Tr protection .....	36
<b>Scheme 3.6.</b> Selected literature procedures for <i>O</i> -Bn protection .....	37
<b>Scheme 3.7.</b> Characterization of side-products 1 and 2 by LRMS.....	39
<b>Scheme 3.8.</b> Possible reaction pathways for the <i>O</i> -benzylation of <b>48</b> .....	40
<b>Scheme 3.9.</b> Revised synthetic route to <i>ent</i> - <b>1</b> .....	42
<b>Scheme 3.10.</b> Further revised synthetic route to <i>ent</i> - <b>1</b> .....	43
<b>Scheme 3.11.</b> Possible mechanism for the cyclization of <b>60</b> .....	49
<b>Scheme 3.12.</b> Prof. Anthony Barrett's proposed mechanism for the cyclization of <b>60</b> .....	49
<b>Scheme 3.13.</b> $\beta$ -Hydride abstraction by trityl cation in selected organometallics.....	50
<b>Scheme 3.14.</b> Example of <i>O</i> -Bn deprotection by $\text{Ph}_3\text{C}^+$ and subsequent cyclization.....	50
<b>Scheme 3.15.</b> Mechanism of de- <i>O</i> -benzylation by $\text{Ph}_3\text{C}^+$ .....	51
<b>Scheme 3.16.</b> A method for validating Prof. Anthony Barrett's proposed mechanism.....	51
<b>Scheme 3.17.</b> Appel cyclization and <i>O</i> -Bn deprotection reactions by Naruse <i>et al</i> .....	52
<b>Scheme 3.18.</b> The synthetic route for <b>1</b> .....	59
<b>Scheme 4.1.</b> Synthetic plan for 1- <i>epi</i> - <b>1</b> and 2- <i>epi</i> - <b>1</b> , based on the previous synthesis of <b>1</b> .....	63
<b>Scheme 4.2.</b> Synthesis of substrate <b>82</b> .....	64
<b>Scheme 4.3.</b> Alternative synthesis of substrate <b>82</b> .....	64
<b>Scheme 4.4.</b> Summary of the two syntheses of <b>82</b> .....	64
<b>Scheme 4.5.</b> A potential way of accessing <i>trans</i> -(3 $\beta$ ,4 $\alpha$ )-diol <b>84</b> using the Prevost reaction....	65

<b>Scheme 4.6.</b> Dihydroxylation of substituted 2,5-dihydropyrroles; comparison of diastereoselectivity according to nitrogen protection .....	65
<b>Scheme 4.7.</b> Synthetic plan for 1- <i>epi</i> - <b>1</b> using cyclic sulfate methodology .....	67
<b>Scheme 4.8.</b> Synthetic plan for 1- <i>epi</i> - <b>1</b> using epoxide methodology .....	67
<b>Scheme 4.9.</b> Synthetic plan for 2- <i>epi</i> - <b>1</b> using cyclic sulfonation or epoxidation methodologies .....	68
<b>Scheme 4.10.</b> Mechanism of the Mattocks reaction when applied to diol <b>91</b> .....	68
<b>Scheme 4.11.</b> Application of Prevost chemistry to the $\alpha$ -bromoacetate <b>94</b> .....	69
<b>Scheme 4.12.</b> Strategies available for the synthesis of 1- <i>epi</i> - <b>1</b> and 2- <i>epi</i> - <b>1</b> .....	69
<b>Scheme 4.13.</b> Example of using cyclic sulfate chemistry to convert a diol moiety from <i>cis</i> to <i>trans</i> .....	70
<b>Scheme 4.14.</b> Synthesis of cyclic sulfonation starting material <b>93</b> .....	70
<b>Scheme 4.15.</b> Results of the formation of cyclic sulfate <b>98</b> from diol <b>93</b> .....	71
<b>Scheme 4.16.</b> Direct cyclic sulfonation using 1,1'-sulfonyldiimidazole .....	72
<b>Scheme 4.17.</b> Results of the ring-opening of cyclic sulfate <b>100</b> .....	72
<b>Scheme 4.18.</b> Mechanism of Oxone mediated epoxidation of an olefin .....	73
<b>Scheme 4.19.</b> Literature example of the synthesis of a <i>trans</i> diol from a 2,5-dihydropyrrole ..	74
<b>Scheme 4.20.</b> Proposed synthetic pathway from epoxide <b>90</b> to final product 2- <i>epi</i> - <b>1</b> .....	75
<b>Scheme 4.21.</b> Alternate mechanisms of the epoxide ring-opening reaction .....	77
<b>Scheme 5.1.</b> Strategy for the synthesis of 1,2-di- <i>epi</i> - <b>1</b> from oxazolone <b>88</b> .....	79
<b>Scheme 5.2.</b> A strategy for the synthesis of 1,2-di- <i>epi</i> - <b>1</b> via an oxazinone <b>116</b> intermediate ..	80
<b>Scheme 5.4.</b> Plan for the synthesis of 1,2-di- <i>epi</i> - <b>1</b> using the Woodward reaction .....	80
<b>Scheme 5.5.</b> Results for the RCM of oxazolidinone <b>122</b> with Grubbs' I catalyst .....	81
<b>Scheme 5.6.</b> Literature example of RCM of an oxazolidinone with Grubbs' I catalyst .....	82
<b>Scheme 5.7.</b> Result for the RCM of <b>114</b> with Grubbs' I catalyst .....	83
<b>Scheme 5.8.</b> Mechanism of the RCM reaction of a diene with either Grubbs' I or II catalyst ..	85
<b>Scheme 5.9.</b> Formation of a $\sigma$ -bond between a metal and ligand .....	86
<b>Scheme 5.10.</b> Types of bonding involved in Grubbs' I and II catalysts .....	86
<b>Scheme 5.11.</b> Decomposition pathway for Grubbs' I catalyst .....	86
<b>Scheme 5.12.</b> Decomposition pathway for Grubbs' II catalyst .....	87
<b>Scheme 5.13.</b> Results for the synthesis of <b>123</b> and <b>115</b> using <i>N</i> -Boc methodology .....	88
<b>Scheme 5.14.</b> Using triphosgene to form an oxazolidinone by Lindsay <i>et al</i> .....	88
<b>Scheme 5.15.</b> Proposed synthesis of <b>125</b> and <b>126</b> from <b>70</b> using triphosgene .....	89
<b>Scheme 5.16.</b> Results for the synthesis of oxazolidinone <b>125</b> from Petasis product <b>70</b> .....	90
<b>Scheme 5.17.</b> Results for the <i>O</i> -Tritylation of <b>125</b> and RCM of <b>130</b> .....	91
<b>Scheme 5.18.</b> Results for the di- <i>O</i> -benzylation of <b>131</b> .....	92

<b>Scheme 5.19.</b> Proposed mechanism for the formation of oxazinone <b>115</b> from oxazolone <b>123</b> .....	92
<b>Scheme 5.20.</b> Results for the <i>N</i> -Troc protection of <b>70</b> and <i>O</i> -Tr protection of <b>135</b> .....	94
<b>Scheme 5.21.</b> Results of the <i>O</i> -Benzylation of <b>136</b> , and subsequent RCM of an isolated mixture of <b>122</b> and <b>114</b> .....	94
<b>Scheme 5.22.</b> Results of the RCM of <b>136</b> and subsequent <i>O</i> -Benzylation of <b>138</b> .....	95
<b>Scheme 5.23.</b> Result of the <i>cis</i> -dihydroxylation of <b>115</b> .....	96
<b>Scheme 5.24.</b> Result of the <i>cis</i> -dihydroxylation of <b>123</b> .....	97
<b>Scheme 5.25.</b> Revised synthetic plan from oxazinone <b>146</b> to 1,2-di- <i>epi</i> - <b>1</b> .....	98
<b>Scheme 5.26.</b> Results of the <i>O</i> -Bn protection of <b>116</b> and <i>O</i> -Tr deprotection of <b>143</b> .....	99
<b>Scheme 5.27.</b> Base hydrolysis of an oxazolone under microwave conditions .....	99
<b>Scheme 5.28.</b> Result of the microwave-assisted hydrolysis of <b>141</b> .....	99
<b>Scheme 5.29.</b> Result of the microwave-assisted hydrolysis of <b>144</b> .....	100
<b>Scheme 5.30.</b> Results of the Appel cyclization of <b>145</b> and <i>O</i> -Bn deprotection of <b>146</b> .....	100
<b>Scheme 6.1.</b> Mechanism of the glycosidase inhibitory activity assay .....	103

## List of Tables

<b>Table 1.1.</b> Inhibition of $\alpha$ -glucosidases by uniflorine A, uniflorine B and <b>3</b> .....	6
<b>Table 1.2.</b> Selected results from Petasis <i>et al.</i> .....	19
<b>Table 3.1.</b> Results of the <i>O</i> -Tr protection of <b>47</b> .....	36
<b>Table 3.2.</b> Comparison of carbonyl $^{13}\text{C}$ NMR chemical shifts between benzylation side-products and starting materials ( $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 75 MHz).....	38
<b>Table 3.3.</b> NMR chemical shifts for benzylic units in side-products 1 and 2.....	39
<b>Table 3.4.</b> Results of the RCM reaction of <b>48</b> .....	43
<b>Table 3.5.</b> NMR chemical shifts ( $\text{CDCl}_3$ ) of hydrocarbon units $\alpha$ to the nitrogen in <b>48</b> and <b>58</b> .....	43
<b>Table 3.6.</b> Results of the dihydroxylation of <b>58</b> .....	44
<b>Table 3.7.</b> Results of the <i>O</i> -benzylation of <b>59</b> .....	44
<b>Table 3.8.</b> Results of TFA mediated deprotection of <i>N</i> -Boc and <i>O</i> -Tr groups in <b>60</b> .....	47
<b>Table 3.9.</b> Comparison of the results for the synthesis of <i>ent</i> - <b>1</b> and <b>1</b> .....	60
<b>Table 3.9 cont'd.</b> Comparison of the results for the synthesis of <i>ent</i> - <b>1</b> and <b>1</b> .....	61
<b>Table 3.10.</b> Rotation and melting point data for uniflorine A and <b>1</b> .....	62
<b>Table 3.11.</b> Overall yields for the synthesis of <i>ent</i> - <b>1</b> and <b>1</b> .....	62
<b>Table 4.1.</b> Results of the epoxidation of <b>82</b> .....	74
<b>Table 5.1.</b> $^1\text{H}$ NMR chemical shifts of corresponding protons in <b>122</b> and <b>123</b> .....	82
<b>Table 5.2.</b> Results for the RCM of <b>122</b> with Grubbs' II catalyst.....	83
<b>Table 5.3.</b> NMR chemical shifts for selected corresponding nuclei in <b>125</b> , <b>127</b> and <b>129</b> .....	91
<b>Table 5.4.</b> Overall yields for <b>123</b> and <b>115</b> from <b>70</b> via different methodologies.....	95
<b>Table 5.5.</b> Selected NMR chemical shifts for corresponding nuclei in <b>115</b> and <b>116</b> .....	96
<b>Table 5.6.</b> Selected $^1\text{H}$ and $^{13}\text{C}$ NMR chemical shifts of corresponding nuclei in <b>141</b> and <b>142</b> .....	98
<b>Table 5.7.</b> Comparison of the NMR data for 1,2-di- <i>epi</i> - <b>1</b> and corresponding literature data. ....	101
<b>Table 6.1.</b> Types of buffer, substrate and temperature for each enzymatic assay.....	102
<b>Table 6.2.</b> $\text{IC}_{50}$ values of <i>ent</i> - <b>1</b> , <b>1</b> , and castanospermine.....	104
<b>Table 6.3.</b> Components in the $\alpha$ -D-mannosidase assay of putative 1,2-di- <i>epi</i> - <b>1</b> .....	104
<b>Table 6.4.</b> $\text{IC}_{50}$ of 1,2-di- <i>epi</i> - <b>1</b> and swainsonine.....	105
<b>Table 7.1.</b> Literature sources of casuarine diastereomers and related data.....	106
<b>Table 7.2.</b> NMR and optical rotation data for casuarine and uniflorine B.....	108

<b>Table 7.3.</b> Corresponding carbon nuclei in overlapping pyrrolizidine and indolizidine structures .....	109
<b>Table 7.4.</b> The $^1\text{H}$ NMR chemical shifts for <b>152</b> , <b>154</b> and uniflorine A .....	109
<b>Table 7.5.</b> $^3J_{\text{HH}}$ values for the A-ring protons of <b>152</b> , <b>154</b> and uniflorine A .....	110
<b>Table 7.6.</b> A-ring $^3J_{\text{HH}}$ values for casuarine diastereomers that are epimeric at C-3 .....	111
<b>Table 7.7.</b> B-ring $^3J_{\text{HH}}$ values for <b>152</b> , <b>154</b> and uniflorine A.....	111
<b>Table 7.8.</b> $^{13}\text{C}$ NMR chemical shifts for <b>152</b> , <b>154</b> and uniflorine A.....	112
<b>Table 7.9.</b> Optical rotation data for <b>152</b> , <b>154</b> , and uniflorine A .....	112

## List of Abbreviations

[ $\alpha$ ] <sub>D</sub>	specific rotation
Ac	acetyl
Ar	aromatic
ax	axial
Bn	benzyl
Boc	<i>tert</i> -butyloxycarbonyl
br	broad
Bz	benzoyl
CI	chemical ionisation
Cy	cyclohexyl
d	doublet
$\delta$	NMR chemical shift
DCM	dichloromethane
DEAD	diethylazodicarboxylate
DEPT	Distortionless Enhancement by Polarisation Transfer
DMAP	<i>N,N</i> -Dimethyl-4-aminopyridine
DMF	dimethylformamide
EI	Electron impact Ionisation
eq	equatorial
ESI+	electrospray ionisation (positive ion mode)
FCC	flash column chromatography
gCOSY	gradient Correlated Spectroscopy
gHSQC	gradient Heteronuclear Single Quantum Correlation
gHMBC	gradient Heteronuclear Multiple Bond Correlation
HR	high resolution
Hz	Hertz
LR	low resolution
MS	mass spectrometry
m	multiplet
m.p.	melting point
[M <sup>+</sup> ]	molecular ion
<i>m/z</i>	mass/charge ratio
NMR	nuclear magnetic resonance
NMO	<i>N</i> -methylmorpholine- <i>N</i> -oxide
petrol	petroleum spirit bp 40-60 °C



ppm	parts per million
pyr	pyridine
q	quartet
$R_f$	relative mobility
rt	room temperature
s	singlet
t	triplet
TFA	trifluoroacetic acid
THF	tetrahydrofuran
Tr	trityl, triphenylmethyl
Troc	(2,2,2-trichloroethoxy)carbonyl

## ABSTRACT

The alkaloid uniflorine A was isolated in 2000 from the leaves of the tree *Eugenia uniflora* L, together with two other water soluble alkaloids, uniflorine B and the known alkaloid (+)-(3 $\alpha$ ,4 $\alpha$ ,5 $\beta$ )-1-methylpiperidine-3,4,5-triol piperidine. Uniflorine A was found to be an inhibitor of the  $\alpha$ -glucosidases, rat intestinal maltase and sucrase, with IC<sub>50</sub> values of 12 and 3.1  $\mu$ M, respectively, and its structure was deduced from NMR analysis to be structure **1**. Uniflorine B was also found to be an inhibitor of the above  $\alpha$ -glucosidases and its structure was determined from NMR analysis to be structure **2**.

The initial goal of this study was to complete the total synthesis of **1** and determine the validity of its proposed structure. In the event, an efficient 9-step diastereoselective synthesis of **1** was achieved by using the Petasis borono-Mannich reaction, ring-closing metathesis and stereoselective *cis*-dihydroxylation as key steps. The structure of our synthetic **1** was unequivocally established by a single-crystal X-ray crystallographic study of its pentaacetate derivative. However, the <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C NMR data for synthetic **1** did not match with those reported for uniflorine A; the latter showed many more downfield peaks in the <sup>1</sup>H NMR, perhaps consistent with the amine salt. The <sup>1</sup>H NMR of the hydrochloride salt of synthetic **1**, however, did not match the literature spectroscopic data either. We therefore concluded that the structure assigned to uniflorine A was not correct. We also found that the coupling constant *J*<sub>1,8a</sub> of 4.5 Hz for uniflorine A, was more consistent with the relative *syn*-H-8a, H-1 configuration, suggesting that uniflorine A, if it was an indolizidine alkaloid, had the same H-1 configuration as castanospermine. Our attempts to prepare 2-*epi*-**1** and 1,2-di-*epi*-**1** were unsuccessful due to unexpected competing side-reactions.

In addition, the diastereoselective synthesis of the C-1, C-2 di-epimer of **1** was achieved. This synthesis employed a novel pyrrolo[1,2-*c*]oxazin-1-one precursor to allow for the reversal of  $\pi$ -facial diastereoselectivity in an osmium(VIII)-catalysed *syn*-dihydroxylation (DH) reaction. The NMR spectroscopic data of this epimeric compound and that of related isomers did not match that of the natural product. From a comparison of the NMR data of uniflorine A and uniflorine B with that of casuarine and the known synthetic 1,2,6,7-tetrahydroxy-3-hydroxymethylpyrrolizidine isomers we concluded unequivocally that uniflorine B is the known alkaloid casuarine. Although we cannot unequivocally prove the structure of uniflorine A, without access to the original material and data, the published data suggest that the natural product is also a 1,2,6,7-tetrahydroxy-3-hydroxymethylpyrrolizidine with the same relative C-7-C-7a-C-1-C-2-C-3 configuration as casuarine. We thus suggest that uniflorine A is 6-*epi*-casuarine.

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## Publications arising from this thesis

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